

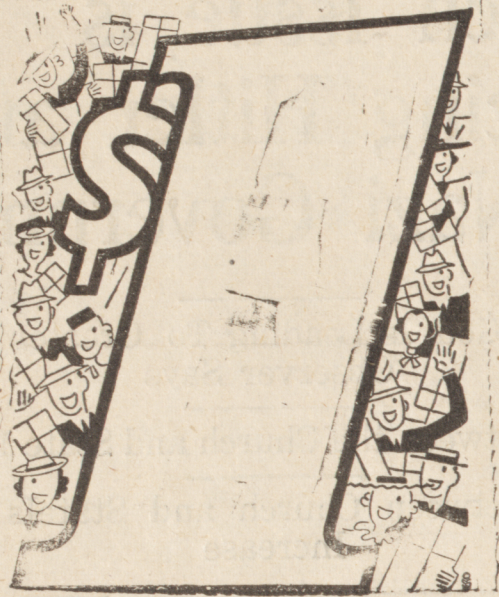


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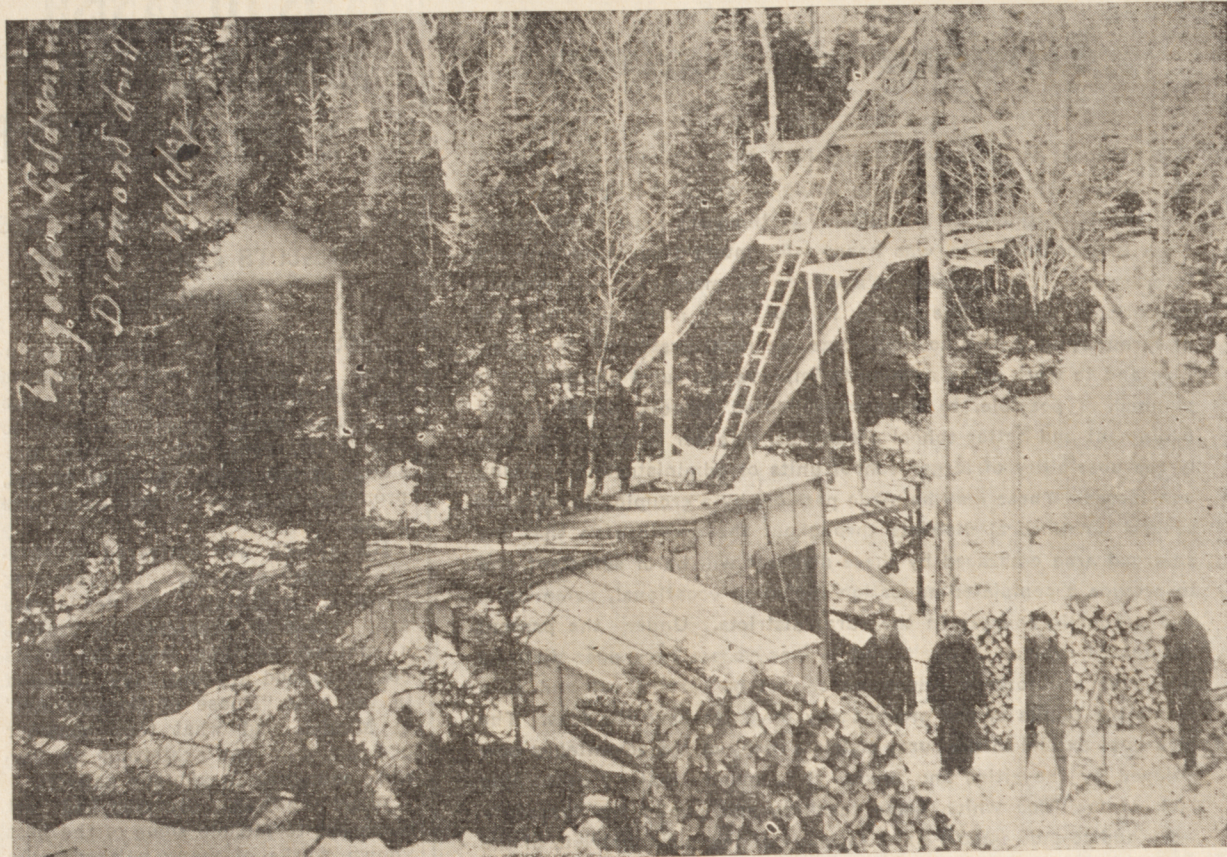
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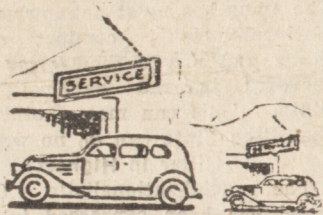


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JAPANESE GIRLS HOLD MONOPOLY OF PEARL DIVING

Men Barred From Planting and Harvesting Of 'Culture' Oysters on 'Farms'

TOBA, Japan—Pearl diving in Japan, exclusively an occupation for women, today is an important industry, producing 5,000,000 pearl oysters a year, many of which are exported to the United States.

For hundreds of years, Japanese girls, ranging from sixteen to twenty five, have supported themselves and their families by following this romantic profession of the sea. No men are allowed to break in on their work of snatching pearl oysters from the sea's bottom.

The metropolis of the pearl world is Pearl Island, in Miyagi Prefecture, which has been known from antiquity for its 'ama,' or female divers. At one time they went nude from the waist up, but Kokichi Mikimoto, the famous 'pearl king' of Japan who is reputed to have become enormously wealthy from the virtual monopoly he enjoys in pearl fishing, insists that all feminine divers shall wear white waists along with their cotton skirts.

So vigorous and hardy do these pearl mermaids become that they continue pearl diving even on the eve of childbirth. The sun gives them a tanned skin, their hair turns reddish from the salt water and they become as weatherbeaten as 'salt tars.'

Japan's fair pearl divers not only search the sea bottom for pearls, but they must work hard in field, farm and home. In fact, they support their brothers, fathers and husbands in idleness.

The girls seldom marry young, because they are too valuable to their parents as breadwinners. Even the wife of a Japanese in easy circumstances—if she be a pearl diver—is expected by public opinion to continue her aquatic profession until long after she is married. Among the elders of the village she would lose 'face' if she gave up so ancient and honorable a profession merely for marriage.

The women both plant and harvest 'culture' pearls. The method they employ forms an epic of the sea. Groups of girl divers, dressed in immaculate white garments, start out for the sea in small sampans, singing the 'Song of the Pearls,' or chanting folk songs. As they reach the 'pearl beds' they wrap their heads with white cloth to keep their hair out of

their eyes and wear glass masks over their eyes and noses as a protection from the salt water.

When the sampans anchor at a point about fifteen feet deep, where pearl oyster larvae have been planted the girls leap down into the water each roped to a big floating wooden bucket into which she puts her 'catch' of oyster pearls. It is a lively scene as the mermaids disappear from the surface and then bob up again like so many dolphins, with their treasure of pearls.

They repeat this process for one hour, and then rest for two hours, after which they dive again. They are paid from 30 to 45 cents a day, which in Japan is considered good wages for a woman.

Eighty year old Kokichi Mikimoto Japan's millionaire pearl king, who leases from the government the sea around Pearl Island, employs thousands of women divers.

At the Mikimoto Pearl Island farm pearl larvae or oyster spawn are deposited in selected spots in ocean bed for three years. They are then brought up again by the divers in the form of young oysters and removed to a pearl plant on the shore. Here experts perform a delicate operation on the oysters to make them pearl breeders.

They are then placed in wire cages suspended some ten feet below the surface of the water, and nurtured for seven years more under the most exacting care. Precautions are taken to guard the oysters against their deadly submarine enemies such as octopi, cold currents, starfish, carnivorous gastropods and microscopic organisms.

When brought ashore the shells of the pearl oysters are opened and the pearls removed and sorted.

After being washed, graded and polished the pearls are sent to Tokyo, where they undergo further embellishment, and are then mounted or formed into necklaces. Ten million dollars worth of these culture pearls are sent annually to United States. A simple way to distinguish true pearls from imitations is to touch them to the tongue. The real pearls are always cold, while imitations absorb heat and soon become warm.

Odd Pranks Played By Fantastic Winds

The tornado which twisted its dizzy, destructive length through a little Indiana town last week called to mind tales of other tornadoes told by grizzled natives of the lowlands. Tales of murky windspouts which appeared in vicious spirals on cloudless horizons, roaring like monstrous trains, and sweeping houses and barns, silos and water towers, into disordered piles of matchstick wood.

One of the most famous and fantastic tornadoes struck rich Rush County farm land late in the last century, the first of a whole summer of such terrors. It happened early in a bright afternoon, and pounded and whirled at a little farming community for nearly thirty minutes. When it lifted and the inhabitants crawled fearfully out of their primitive but practical 'storm cellars' they discovered, among others, these little metamorphoses of the country scene.

Upon a picket fence, the posts of which had been decorated with pint-sized Mason fruit jars, the twister had played one of its familiar caprices. It wriggled in and out through the fence—smashing every third jar for a space of nearly 50 feet. It had cut an old-fashioned three-story farm house neatly in two, separating the two halves of the house, formerly divided by a long central hallway, by an additional eight feet. It had picked up an entire length of picket fence, carried it across 500 yards of freshly plowed ground, and driven it into the earth at a crazy angle—still intact. In its more conventional character it had lifted the roofs off barns, torn fifty year old maples from their moorings, and scattered the contents of many a corn crib.

Arthur Godfrey, announcer and commentator on the Prof. Quiz show, may easily claim to be among radio's most active personalities, what with 85 sponsors on his Sundial program over Washington's WJVS. But Godfrey also pursues his avocation, farming, with equal vigor on his Virginia estate.

Last summer an inn keeper wouldn't purchase any of Godfrey's farm products, saying conditions were bad. So artful Arthur sold him the idea that publicity on the air would increase business. It did, an how! Godfrey's plug brought the man so much volume of trade that this summer he buys all the produce the announcer-agriculturist can supply.

Dean Benny Goodman, head of the summer session Swing School features Lionel Stander, latest in a series of visiting anti-swingites, on the broadcast, Tuesday, July 27, at 9:30 P. M., EDST, over the WABC-CBS network.



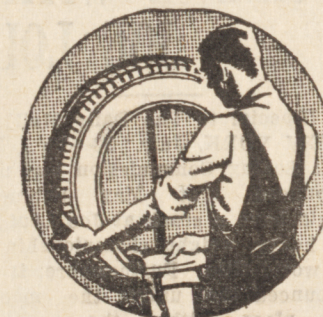
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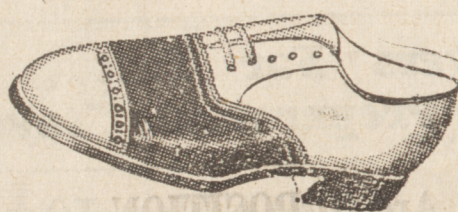


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